RAJYA SABHA

Monday, the 23rd August, 1993/1st Bhadra, 1915 (Saka)

The House met at eleven of the clock, **The Deputy Chairman** in the Chair.

MEMBERS SWORN

Shrimati Chandra Kala Pandey (West Bengal).

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Madam, the Treasury Benches are empty today.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Never mind, we will have more questions. Question No. 361.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

देश में निर्धनता में वृद्धि

*361. डा० जिनेन्द्र कुमार जैन :
श्री वीरेन जे० शाह :

क्या योजना और कार्यक्रम कार्यान्वयन मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या सरकार का ध्यान 6 अगस्त, 1993 के "डेली आब्जर्वर" में "नियरली 35 मिलियन मोर अर्बन पुअर वाई 2000 ए०डी०" शीर्षक से प्रकाशित समाचार की ओर दिलाया गया है ;

(ख) क्या यह सच है कि एशियाई विकास बैंक द्वारा डा० ओम प्रकाश [illegible] के नेतृत्व में गठित दल ने अपनी [illegible] में कहा है कि 2000 ईस्वी तक [illegible] में शहरी क्षेत्रों में गरीबों की [illegible] 200 से 350 लाख की वृद्धि जाएगी ;

† सभा में यह प्रश्न डा० जिनेन्द्र कुमार जैन द्वारा पूछा गया।

(ग) यदि हां, तो सरकार की इस पर क्या प्रतिक्रिया है ;

(घ) क्या यह भी सच है कि देश में दैनिक उपभोग की वस्तुओं जैसे आटा, दाल, चीनी, दूध और सब्जियां आदि की कीमतें निरन्तर बढ़ रही हैं तथा ये सामान्य नागरिक की पहुंच से बाहर होती जा रही है क्योंकि देश में प्रति व्यक्ति की आय में पर्याप्त वृद्धि नहीं हो रही है ;

(ङ) यदि हां, तो क्या सरकार आठवीं पंच वर्षीय योजना अवधि के शेष वर्षों में उपरोक्त वस्तुओं की कीमतें तत्काल कम करने के लिये योजना की प्राथमिकताओं में संशोधन करने पर विचार करेगी ; और

(च) यदि नहीं, तो उसके क्या कारण हैं ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI GIRIDHAR GOMANGO): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The author has himself observed in the report that there has been a decline in the incidence of urban poverty, whatever measure of poverty one uses. Therefore, his projection of 20 to 35 million poor in 2000 AD, based on the assumption of constant incidence of poverty, is not quite correct.

(d) No, Sir. Average annual growth in per capita income during the period 1983-84 to 1991-92 was higher than the average annual increase in prices of the commodities in question.

(e) and (f) Do not arise. However, the Government has been constantly making efforts to bring down the rate of inflation.

DR. JINENDRA KUMAR JAIN: Madam, the question relates to the urban poor and their plight. Obviously, I am worried about the increase

in their number and their hardships. In his reply the hon. Minister has stated that there is a decline in the incidence of poverty because the average annual growth in per capita income during the period was higher than the average annual increase in prices of the commodities. Obviously, there is a fudging of the figures.

The figures which are already available with us and with the press are different from the figures which the hon. Minister has used while preparing his answer. I would like to know: how would the Government explain this fudging of the figures; why has the Government not adopted a transparent methodology for laying down the criteria for the definition of poverty and also for determining the proportion of poor in the country? There was an Expert Group in 1989, headed by Prof. Lakdawala in the Planning Commission. This Expert Group had recommended a definite methodology for determining the number and the proportion of the poor. Will the Government accept that methodology because if there is a uniform method, there will not be any fudging of figures?

SHRI GIRIDHAR GOMANGO: Madam, the main question arises out of the report of Dr. Mathur. My reply is in answer to that report. The hon. Member has said that it is fudging of the figures. It is not so. Whatever figures are given are on the basis of the last survey conducted in 1987-88. The latest survey was commenced in 1993. On the basis of earlier survey report whatever incidence of poverty in the urban areas has been given, that I have given in my statement. The Lakdavala report was recently received by the Planning Commission. That is being examined now, and whatever methodology was suggested and indicated in the report will be considered by the Planning Commission. About urban poverty, the figures indicate that for 1987-88 the percentage of population was 20.1 and persons in lakhs are 417.0 This is the figure available with me. Whatever reports have appeared, I think they are on the basis of the compilation of different figures which appeared in papers or magazines. We are basing ours on the report of the survey conducted by the National Sample Survey Organisation.

DR. JINENDRA KUMAR JAIN: Madam, are you satisfied that the hon. Minister has taken care of my question?

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The hon. Minister has said your original question was about Dr. Om Prakash Mathur's report, and he has replied to that effect. You are referring to some other report or some other methodology. You are not mentioning your question.

DR. JINENDRA KUMAR JAIN: I am not referring to any methodology. I am just saying that there is a fudging of figures. There is an assumption that the hon. Minister has arrived at, based on a certain set of statistics, and I have arrived at some other assumption, based on another set of statistics. My question was, is there a possibility of the Government having a transparent system of set criteria so that there is no possibility of fudging of figures?

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: That, I think, he will look into and find out. He can't say offhand.

DR. JINENDRA KUMAR JAIN: The Chair should not be suggestive.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Why can't I suggest? I can suggest to the Government, if you are suggesting a good method, that he should look into it. He will look into so that there is a more transparent system. Your second supplementary, please.

DR. JINENDRA KUMAR JAIN: If the figures are fudged, we can keep talking endlessly, without arriving at any point.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: So there is no supplementary arising out of it.

DR. JINENDRA KUMAR JAIN: Okay.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Obviously!

बैठ जाइए, हम दूसरा क्वैश्चन पूछ लेते हैं।

DR. JINENDRA KUMAR JAIN: Madam, as I have said in the beginning, my question relates to the plight of the urban poor. Now I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister to a very basic minimum human need, that is, to defecate every day. I am sorry to say that for the urban poor such basic amenities are quite non-existent. Take Delhi, for example. There is a press report which says that there are 32 lakh poor people living in the slum areas, and the Municipal Corporation of Delhi has decided to levy a charge of Rs. 15 per month per household for giving them the facility of Sulabh Sauchalaya. My plea is, while this country and the Government are making large investments for improving the flush structures which are used by the rich, for poor people, who are also citizens of this country, they are not able to provide basic minimum facilities meant for defecation and are levying charges for providing such a facility. Where is the planning system working? That is my question. What has the hon. Planning Minister to say? Do the poor have a place in planning?

SHRI GIRIDHAR GOMANGO: Madam, the hon. Member in the first supplementary which.....

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Actually this question about the price rise, Sulabh Sauchalay, toilets, flush and figures is very vague. So, I think, you will have to discuss the thing. It canot be taken up in a question, I think. . . (*Interruptions*)

I have to take care of the question also. I cannot just allow supplementaries if the question is very vague.

DR. JINENDRA KUMAR JAIN: Why is such a question listed?

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I will restrict such a question in future.

बोलिए। आप जो जवाब दे सकते हैं, दे दीजिये।

DR. JINENDRA KUMAR JAIN: But the Chair cannot act as a Minister.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I will definitely see that such questions do not go.....

DR. JINENDRA KUMAR JAIN: Madam, you are acting as a two-in-one.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No, please. Please don't question me. Please take your seat.

SHRI GIRIDHAR GOMANGO: Madam, in reply to the first supplementary I have mentioned about the methodology to be adopted by the Government. I have mentioned that the Lakdavala Report has been received by the Planning Commission. Certainly we will take into consideration whatever the hon. Member is suggesting.

In the second supplementary he wants to know what programmes have been undertaken by the Government for urban poor. Madam, as you know, the Nehru Rozgar Yojana is being implemented by the Urban

Development Ministry. Then there was the Self-Employment Programme for Urban Poor. There is the Self-Employment Programme for Educated Unemployed Youth. These three programmes were being implemented by the Ministries concerned. Then, the Central Plan outlay provided for Nehru Rojgar Yojana in the year 1992-93 was Rs. 71 crores, the anticipated expenditure is Rs. 71 crores. Then for 1993-94 Rs. 74 crores has been provided for. We have got these schemes only to give attention to the urban poor. The suggestions given by the hon. Member cover all these programmes. An integrated programme will have to be undertaken.

As you are aware, Madam, the Twelfth Schedule has been added to the Constitution recently through a Constitution amendment, and the responsibility for urban area development, planning, social development, slum improvement, poverty alleviation, statistics, has been given to the Nagar Palikas. After this, they will have to have an area approach to solve the problems in the urban areas. The municipalities will take the area approach in the urban areas. The States as well as the Centre will provide funds for them.

SHRI VIREN J. SHAH: It is a matter of good fortune that the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission, in his capacity as a Member, is listening to this. He cannot answer, but he will be listening to him. I am sure he will be as satisfied by the replies as the rest of the Members here.

May I draw the attention of the hon. Minister to Starred Question No. 277 of the 16th of August last year, wherein the reply given by the Minister was:

> "...recommended methodology for estimating poverty, and it is going to be looked into."

The second point to which I want to draw the attention of the hon. Minister is this. Is the hon. Minister aware that on the 30th of July this year a oneday conference was held in the United Nations Development Programme Hall in New Delhi? It was sponsored by the Asian Development Bank and Dr. Raja Chelliah who is the Fiscal Advisor to the Government with the rank of Minister of State. The various participants included experts, ex-Member of the Planning Commission and serving point Secretaries. They brought out some very effective points on urban poverty. Is the hon. Minister aware of this conference? Will the points made therin be taken note of by him?

Madam, with your permission, I would mention only two or three...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN. Is it a question or information? Mr. Jain, are you asking a question or giving information to the House? Please ask a question.

SHRI VIREN J. SHAH: Without the information, the question cannot be understood by anybody. So, with great respect to the Deputy Chairman, this is relevant.

Mrs. Ila Bhatt mentions that enough time has been spent in measuring poverty and doing methodology. What we must do is to start acting. A Joint Secretary, Mr. Dharma Rajan, mentioned that only five paise per day per person were spent on the urban poor. These are facts. Much more information is there, but the Deputy Chairman says I cannot go into it. Would the hon. Minister look into the discussions that took place on 30th July, some of the suggestions made, conclusions arrived at and the specific guidance, "Stop going into evolving a methodology, ten years later study the methodology, but start moving with particular reference to the urban poor."

Thirty to forty per cent of population in urban areas is living in slums and is creating social problems, economic problems, crime situations, and civic problems. How are you going to go about that with reference to the 30th July Conference?

SHRI GIRIDHAR GOMANGO: Madam, already I explained the methodology. Whatever suggestions are there from whichever quarters, if they are within the norms and the methodology, there is nothing to deny or say 'no' to that. But the point is whatever the methodologies so far adopted, they were guided by...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order, please. I can not hear the Minister myself.

SHRI GIRIDHAR GOMANGO: The total percentage of population below the poverty line in urban areas —I have got the figures here—(*Interruptions*) The total is 437 lakhs. That is an all-India figure.

SHRI VIREN J. SHAH: That is not my question. Would you take note of all the points—particularly the three points that I have raised?

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Just a minute. He is coming to that.

SHRI GIRIDHAR GOMANGO: That was in 1972-73. But as per the 1987-88, the last survey conducted, it was 417. That has reduced to 20.1 per cent. This is the total figure available with me. As regards the methodology part for computing or making a survey, we have got the sample surveys and the detailed surveys conducted on the basis of the norms that are given to us.

SHRI VIREN J. SHAH: What about the question? Are you aware of the 30th July Conference? Would you take note of the various points made out by people not only of the UNDP, but also people like Dr. Raja Chelliah and Government, civil servants in which specific issues were brought up. Would you take note of it? Have you studied it? This is a simple question.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Are you aware of the 30th July Conference? If you are not, are you going to take note of it?

SHRI GIRIDHAR GOMANGO: Whatever the comments or reports, given by the experts, this question does not relate to the main question.

SHRI VIREN J. SHAH: In the 30th July conference the export was discussed.

SHRI GIRIDHAR GOMANGO: The Report of the 30th July Conference has to be examined by the Planning Commission and whatever the methodology is there, we will see.

DR. NAUNIHAL SINGH: Despite the period of 40 years of regimented planning and development, which is close to half a century, India is still one of the ten poorest countries of the world. Through you, Madam, may I ask the hon. Minister the reasons therefor?

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: This is a very vague question. We will be wasting the time of the House.

SHRIMATI CHANDRIKA ABHINANDAN JAIN: I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister to the pitiable plight the metropolitan city of Bombay is facing. It is supposed to be the financial capital of the country and 35 per cent of the income is generated in the city of Bombay. But, half of the population i.e. almost 5 million people out of 10 million people are living in slums there. Madam, you also hail from the city of Bombay and you are also aware of the problems of the slum dwellers. When we are talking of the urban poor, we must also pay

attentoin to the amenities provided to the slum dwellers, particularly in the city of Bombay. Basic amenities like water, sanitary arrangement, electricity are not there. The Government of Maharashtra has been approaching and talking to the Central Government day in and day out There are various departments involved in getting the permission to provide the basic amenities to the city of Bombay particularly the slum dwellers. The majority of the slums are housed on Government land, be it Defence, be it...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: That doesn't relate to this. You can put your question relating to planning but not on Central Government land.

SHRIMATI CHANDRIKA ABHINANDAN JAIN: I would like from the hon. Minister whether he can coordinate in seeing that the permission which is obtained from the Central Government ... (*Interruptions*)... That is part (a) of my question which arises from the main question. The second part of my question also arises out of the main question. Fifty percent of the population will be living in urban areas by the end of the century. Right now it is 30 per cent. But the end of the century it will be 50 per cent of the people living in urban areas.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Okay, now let him answer, if he can.

SHRIMATI CHANDRIKA ABHINANDAN JAIN: May I know from the Urban Development Minister whether he is aware of the fact that 50 per cent of the population will be...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: He is not the Urban Development Minister. He is a Planning Minister. He is answering questions on planning and programme implementation. The original question relates to that. So the question doesn't arise. Q. No. 362.

Distrite consumer fora

*362. SHRI TINDIVANAM G. VENKATRAMAN:†
SHRI V. GOPALSAMY:

Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 2298 given in the Rajya Sabha on 15th March, 1993 and state:

(a) whether as on date, all districts in all States/Union Territories in the country are presently having Consumer District Forum;

(b) if not, the details of the States not having the District Consumer Fora; and

(c) what steps are being taken to see that each district has its own Consumer Forum as early as possible?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI A. K. ANTONY): (a) to (c) A Statement is placed on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) to (c) Under the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 the responsibility for setting up Consumer Disputes Redressal Forum (District Forum) rests with the State Governments/ U.T. Administrations. At present, District Forums are functioning in 452 districts covering all the States/ UTs. The States of Bihar, Punjab, Arunachal Pradesh and Orissa have to set up additional District Forum in the newly created districts Forums in the newely created districts. The Act does not extend to the State of Jammu & Kashmir.

†The Question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Tindivanam G. Venkatraman.